



MONKEYPOX

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Monkeypox is a rare viral disease that occurs mostly in central and western Africa. It is called “monkeypox” because it was first found in 1958 in laboratory monkeys. Blood tests of animals in Africa later found that other types of animals probably had monkeypox. Scientists also recovered the virus that causes monkeypox from an African squirrel. These types of squirrels might be the common host for the disease. Rats, mice and rabbits can get monkeypox, too. Monkeypox was reported in humans for the first time in 1970.

Is there monkeypox in the United States?

In early June 2003, monkeypox was reported among several people in the United States. Most of these people got sick after having contact with pet prairie dogs that were sick with monkeypox. This is the first time that there has been an outbreak of monkeypox in the United States.

What causes monkeypox?

The disease is caused by *Monkeypox virus*. It belongs to a group of viruses that includes the smallpox virus (variola), the virus used in the smallpox vaccine (vaccinia), and the cowpox virus.

What are the signs and symptoms of monkeypox?

In humans, the signs and symptoms of monkeypox are like those of smallpox, but usually they are milder. Another difference is that monkeypox causes the lymph nodes to swell.

About 12 days after people are infected with the virus, they will get a fever, headache, muscle aches and backache; their lymph nodes will swell; and they will feel tired. One to three days (or longer) after the fever starts, they will get a rash. This rash develops into raised bumps filled with fluid and often starts on the face and spreads, but it can start on other parts of the body too. The bumps go through several stages before they get crusty, scab over and fall off. The illness usually lasts two to four weeks.

Can you die from monkeypox?

In Africa, monkeypox has killed between 1 percent and 10 percent of people who get it. However, this risk would probably be lower in the United States, where nutrition and access to medical care are better.

How do you catch monkeypox?

People can get monkeypox from an animal that has monkeypox if they are bitten or if they touch the animal’s blood, body fluids or rash. The disease also can spread from person to person through large respiratory droplets during long periods of face-to-face contact or by touching body fluids of a sick person or objects such as bedding or clothing contaminated with the virus.

For more information, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2378.

